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## WITH THE NEW PRINTED FABRICS

By VIRGINIA ROBIE

SOMETHING in the spring atmosphere makes chintz as welcome to the eye as a lark's song to the ear, garden pinks to the nostrils, or a new salad to the palate. Even the riot of pattern seen in some of the shops pleases for the moment, though overcolorful for continual use.

This is a season of brilliant dyes and startling designs. The "modest violet" must be sought—and sometimes in vain. When found the timid pattern usually fails to charm. It is often poorly drawn, badly colored and wholly lacking in distinction. Many of the boldest designs are superbly handled—beautiful in line and color, and full of that dash and spirit which just escapes the bizarre. These are the fabrics to use if the right place is found for them for they are well tuned to the spring mood which demands freshness and joyousness and a touch of the unexpected.

We tire of our houses as we do of our clothes and those everyday problems which, like the poor, are always with us. Try chintz as you would a new breakfast menu or a brief trip to the country, or let it be cretonne, printed linen, or linen taffeta. The use of the word "chintz" for everything in printed cotton and linen is illuminating to the amateur, but disturbing to the salesman who is unimaginative but usually correct. A morning spent in hunting *chintz* brings to light far more cretonne and printed linen, nor are exact definitions of "chintz" as cheerfully set forth by long-suffering clerks always clear. Chintz, we learn, is more than a material. It is the pattern itself and the way the pattern is printed; and cretonne is always cotton, which we remember having heard before; and we end by spending most of the morning with the printed linens which by courtesy we still call "chintz" falling back on such an authority as that gifted lady of decoration, Miss de Wolfe.

Possibly the technical definition is less important than the right choice of color scheme and design. At the outset one discards certain patterns, beautiful as to color and composition, but suggesting the

paint brush rather than the loom. Of such is the seagull against foam-crested waves of blue and green. Truly a stunning print but pictorial rather than decorative—and one is reconciled to its high price which is five dollars a yard.

Some of the expensive designs are in stripes which may be cut apart and used as borders on plain material, others are so wide that comparatively little is required, and some are so decorative that their use may be confined to screens, or to panels between windows or doors. To the latter class

belongs the "Garden of Allah," a delightful French linen, showing white peacocks against a wonderful garden background. Another linen has the quality of a Japanese print with pine trees and distant mountains. These patterns are not effective when pulled on a rod. As curtains and portières they are less successful than bird and flower designs, or the urns and baskets and other conventionalized motifs. For slip-covers the largest patterns should be avoided for here again the charm is apt to vanish. Very effective for screens are the black backgrounds showing brilliant birds and flowers in semi-Chinese style, and these also lend themselves to a delightful window treatment.

The living-room of a woman's clubhouse in New York shows an agreeable use of chintz at the windows. Chinese blue, not black, forms the back-



Like an Old-Fashioned Flower Garden Is This French Taffeta in Which Roses of Several Colors, Peonies Varying from Pale Pink to Deepest Claret, and Many Other Gay Posies Are Blended. For Curtains and Slip-Covers in a Room Where the Other Things Are Fairly Quiet, This Design Would Be Extremely Attractive.

ground and the pattern consists of vases of pink tulips and yellow butterflies. The walls are of plaster moulded in flat panels and tinted putty color. The carpet is a tone darker, while the furniture is lustrous black. Several pieces of wicker are painted Chinese blue, set in black frames. Two chandeliers holding electric candles, very simple in design, furnish the overhead light, supplemented by lamps in Chinese vases with grass cloth shades, the tone of the walls. There are no pictures but many of the wall panels contain mirrors in plain gold frames, and there are always flowers chosen to accord with the color scheme. There is a delightful simplicity to the room and a good deal of that rare quality—repose.

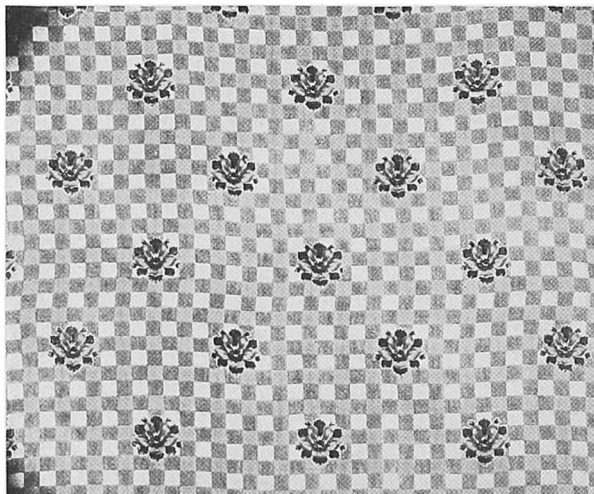
To use a figured material in large quantities and yet to avoid the restless and the confusing is no small matter. Many rooms are made fatiguing by the injudicious use of pattern and alas, many are tame and insipid by an over abundance of plain surfaces. Nothing helps out in the balance between the two extremes better than a discriminating use of a printed textile.

With plain walls and floors the window treatment may well be decorative, but do not conceal the win-



Printed Linen in Hawthorn Pattern on Gray Blue. While Full of Spirit the Birds Are of Less Brilliant Plumage Than Those of the Other Designs.

dow trim under layers of material. Respect the architect and his work. In simple rooms where the windows are comparatively small, shades of chintz or of cretonne will often give just the needed amount of pattern. These may be hung inside the window frame, thus preserving the structural beauty. With



In Contrast to Most of the Designs Is a Demure Belgian Linen, "Now Out of Print"



Quite Impressionistic Is the Grape-Vine Design in Which Soft Purples, Mauve, and Russet Browns Are Skilfully Blended.

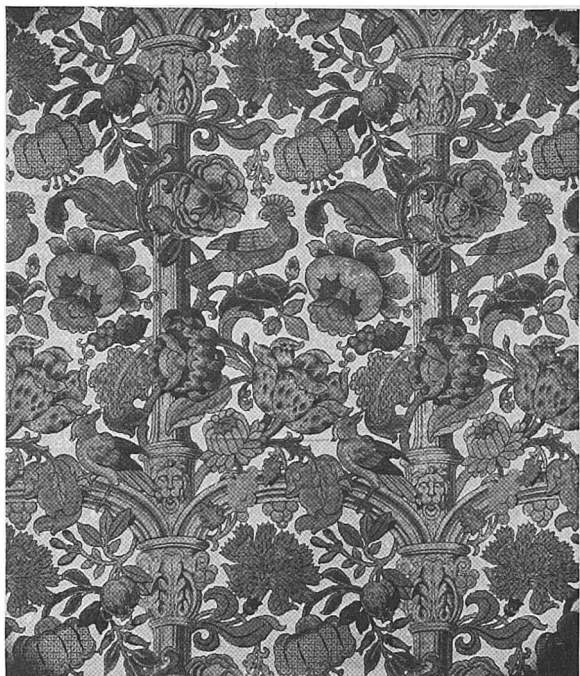
this scheme curtains are superfluous. At night such a shade is surprisingly attractive, having the character of a panel.

Another effective and simple use for the printed fabric is as a temporary cover for a large table. Often a room which just misses being interesting may be given the needed touch by the addition of a decorative material used horizontally. We often limit our use of figured material to vertical surfaces forgetting the importance of pattern when lying flat. Particularly in a room where the rugs are plain will the table-cover or couch cover of gay pattern contribute interest and distinction. Slip-covers have a double advantage, and the clever decorator advocates the big chair in its chintz or cretonne slip as a permanent possession of the living-room.

It is worthy of note that English and French



English Chintz Printed in Kent from Blocks Fifty Years Old



An Old Belgian Tapestry Was the Inspiration of This Linen Which Is Finely Adapted for Libraries and Rooms Where a Rich and Rather Architectural Textile Is Desired

designs are fairly numerous and that our own manufacturers are producing delightful patterns. Prices are of widest range—from twenty-three cents a yard for “Dorothy Perkins” roses growing against a picket fence to five dollars for the flying gulls and the realistic waves. It is well in deciding the important question of price to consider whether the cheapest cottons will launder well, whether sun will fade, and—quite important—whether the design itself has a fairly lasting quality. The block printed cottons and linens will be fairly expensive, and those that charm by their great beauty of tone are seldom of the cheapest, although some in the “two and six” class are wonderfully attractive. Much depends on the use and purpose, and whether or not the purchase involves many yards. A number of interesting things may be done with a few yards of a really beautiful pattern.

Do not forego the pleasure of using “chintz” simply because you cannot buy it in large quantities. As with cayenne and tobasco sauce, many of the designs are most appreciated in limited amounts. No one to-day would tolerate the chintz room of the English novel, where walls, furniture and draperies set forth the same pattern. Doubtless the heroine was bored to death at the end of the first week.

If we have learned anything about housefurnishing in the past ten years, it is to

value restraint and to seek picturesque contrasts. The peacock or the bird of paradise multiplied over and over becomes merely a tiresome thing in printed feathers. Used sparingly and with decorative tact it will please to-morrow quite as much as to-day, and possibly more next week.

The historic ornament of many countries may be traced in the printed fabrics. The Chinese peony, the Japanese chrysanthemum, the Persian pink, the Dutch tulip, the French lily and the English rose bloom as they never did on native soil. As for the birds, a second Audubon must classify them. Less popular than formerly are the English songsters of quiet plumage, while the plump robins and sleek bluebirds of the William Morris School seem to have taken flight altogether. The orchard has given place to the Jungle—and the jungle at high noon.



Suggestive of Chinese Embroidery Is This Taffeta of Exotic Birds and Peonies. The Colors Are Intense but So Well-Balanced That the Effect Is Very Pleasing



Of Colonial Feeling Is This Latticed Cretonne. Against Black and White Stripes, Roses and Tulips Are Growing